

OSA 5224-63

3 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Programs Staff, Office of Special Activities
SUBJECT : Flight Recorders for Constellation Shuttle Aircraft
REFERENCE : Message from Mr. Cunningham to Mr. Johnson,
Dated 17 September 1963

1. Kelly Johnson responded to the referenced cable orally to me on the phone 30 September as follows:

a. Lockheed flight recorders for each of the [redacted] constellation aircraft in our control will cost \$4,025 each, with a total cost of \$6,910 each installed. This is a total of [redacted]

b. Kelly has researched the FAA requirement for the installation of these flight recorders and advises me that Civil Air Regulations, Part 42.15 states that these recorders are required for installation in multi-engine, passenger-carrying aircraft operated by "certificated air carriers". This is a technicality which means that since we are not operating these aircraft under this heading, we could escape the requirement for installing them in the planes.

2. Despite Paragraph 1.b. above, I feel that the requirement for these recorders can stand on its own two feet. If we have an accident involving injury or death to anyone carried by these aircraft, information to be derived from a flight recorder recovered from the wreckage could be a vital turning point in establishing such things as structural failure, negligent operation, etc., which might well be necessary in the settlement of legal claims or insurance benefits in the courts. Therefore, I view the recorders as much as a protection to the Government as to Lockheed. Experience has also shown that flight recorders

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tend to act as a restraint upon flight crews who may otherwise depart occasionally from standard operating procedures for their aircraft. We have had several such instances in the past, none of which fortunately has caused us any major problem.

3. There is a daily or weekly requirement to service the flight recorders by installing and removing recording tapes, but I think this is a small price to be paid for the benefits to be gained.

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4. Accordingly, I intend to authorize Kelly Johnson to proceed with the procurement and installation of these instruments in our [] aircraft. Please prepare an Activity Program for the amount noted above in coordination with Contracts Division, OSA, for my signature. I will attend to advising Lockheed.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

cc: []

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AAD/OSA:JACunningham, Jr./mm